

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 537

Whereas 9-1-1 is nationally recognized as the number to call in an emergency to receive immediate help from police, fire, emergency medical services, or other appropriate emergency response entities;

Whereas in 1967, the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice recommended that a "single number should be established" nationwide for reporting emergency situations, and other Federal Government agencies and various governmental officials also supported and encouraged the recommendation;

Whereas in 1968, the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T) announced that it would establish the digits 9-1-1 as the emergency code throughout the United States;

Whereas 9-1-1 was designated by Congress as the national emergency call number under the Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act of 1999 (Public Law 106-81);

Whereas the ENHANCE 911 Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-494) established enhanced 9-1-1 as "a high national priority" as part of our Nation's homeland security and public safety;

Whereas it is important that policy makers at all levels of government understand the importance of 9-1-1, how the system works today, and the steps that are needed to modernize the 9-1-1 system;

Whereas the 9-1-1 system is the connection between the eyes and ears of the public and emergency responders, and is a significant homeland security asset;

Whereas there are over 6,000 9-1-1 public safety answering points (PSAPs) serving more than 3,000 counties and parishes throughout the United States;

Whereas PSAPs answer more than 200,000,000 9-1-1 calls each year in the United States, and a growing number of 9-1-1 calls are made using wireless and Internet Protocol-based communications services;

Whereas a growing segment of the population, including the deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind, and individuals with speech disabilities, are increasingly communicating with nontraditional text, video, and instant messaging communications services, and anticipate that these services will be able to connect directly to 9-1-1;

Whereas the growth and variety of means of communication, including mobile and Internet Protocol-based systems, impose challenges for accessing 9-1-1 and implementing enhanced 9-1-1, and require increased education and awareness about their capabilities and limitations;

Whereas numerous other N-1-1 and 800 number services exist for non-emergency situations, including 2-1-1, 3-1-1, 5-1-1, 7-1-1, 8-1-1, poison control centers, and mental health hotlines, and the public needs to be educated on when to use these services in addition to or instead of 9-1-1;

Whereas international visitors and individuals immigrating to the United States make up an increasing part of the Nation's population in any given year, and such visitors and individuals may have limited knowledge of our emergency calling system;

Whereas people of all ages use 9-1-1, and it is critical to educate members of the public of all ages on the proper use of 9-1-1;

Whereas thousands of 9-1-1 calls are made every year by children properly trained in the use of 9-1-1, resulting in lives saved, and which, in turn, underscores the critical importance of training children early in life about 9-1-1;

Whereas there is a need to reduce the widespread misuse of the 9-1-1 system, including

prank and non-emergency calls, which can result in costly and inefficient use of 9-1-1 and emergency response resources;

Whereas we as a Nation should strive to host at least 1 educational event in every school in the country each year regarding the proper use of 9-1-1;

Whereas an established National 9-1-1 Education Month could include public awareness events, including conferences and media outreach, training activities for parents, teachers, school administrators, care givers, children, the elderly, and businesses; educational events in schools and other appropriate venues; and production and distribution of educational content on 9-1-1 designed to educate people of all ages on the importance and proper use of 9-1-1; and

Whereas Americans deserve the finest the Nation can offer in 9-1-1 education: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the designation of an appropriate month as "National 9-1-1 Education Month" and the goals of such designation; and

(2) requests that the President issue a proclamation—

(A) designating a month as "National 9-1-1 Education Month"; and

(B) calling upon Government officials, parents, teachers, school administrators, care givers, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and the people of the United States to observe such month with appropriate ceremonies, training events, and activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Now I would yield myself such time as I might consume.

As a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleagues in the consideration of H. Res. 537, as amended, which expresses the House's support for the designation and goals of National 9-1-1 Month.

H. Res. 537 was introduced by Representative ANNA ESHOO of the great State of California on July 11, 2007, and has the support and cosponsorship of nearly 60 Members of Congress. Upon introduction, the measure was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform where it was passed by the panel by voice vote after having been amended on February 26, 2008.

Madam Speaker, it is only fitting that we consider this resolution today, as it makes the important point of highlighting National 9-1-1 Month as a way of reminding everybody of the significance these three small numbers hold in times of emergency and distress.

Whether young or old, the number 9-1-1, which had its first debut back in 1968 when AT&T, under the encouragement of Congress, established the digits as the Nation's emergency telephone number, is known by most Americans as the number to ring when someone needs a fire, police, or ambulance response right away because of a threat to health, safety, or property. There are countless stories that I am sure we can all recall where children as young as 3 or 4 have remembered to pick up the phone and dial the numerical sequence of 9-1-1, thereby saving the lives of parents, grandparents, caretakers, and siblings.

Further, urging support for National 9-1-1 Month education would be futile if we failed to mention the commitment and diligence of the thousands of persons that serve on the other end of the 9-1-1 line. By simply doing their jobs, these 9-1-1 call takers are saving lives every hour of every day by dispatching emergency first responders and by providing verbal support and comfort in some of the most perilous moments of our lives.

As localities and communities across our great country consistently search for ways to make the 9-1-1 calling system more efficient, reliable and well-known, let us do our part in elevating the importance of the numbers 9-1-1 by passing the measure at hand, which expresses the support of the entire House of Representatives for the designation and goals of National 9-1-1 Month.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of this resolution expressing support for the designation and goals of National 9-1-1 Education Month. Every day across this great Nation, lives are saved thanks to this simple, yet vital, support service.

Recommended in 1967 by the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice and established a year later by AT&T, 9-1-1 has continued to evolve as an integral part of America's vital emergency response and homeland security. Each year over 200 million calls are received by the 6,000-plus public safety answering points across the country. These calls come from people of all walks of life, young and old, wealthy and poor. As this service is a vital access point for the public to reach a public safety official during a time of need, it is critical that we continue to educate our citizens on the services 9-1-1 provides and the appropriate uses of the number.

We must also continue to modernize this vital tool. There is a growing population of citizens, otherwise unable to communicate clearly, who are learning to communicate through new technologies such as text, video, and instant messaging. We should strive to connect the use of emerging technologies to the 9-1-1 system.